

FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE
UNITED STATES FORCES, JAPAN
OKINAWA BUREAU
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Director, FBIS

Subject: FBIS Admin Staffing

Dear John:

With several major personnel changes due this summer--not only among senior FBIS careerists, but also within the Admin Staff--I have a proposal to submit. It is simply that we designate the position of Deputy Chief, FBIS Admin, as one to be filled by an FBIS GS-14 (or senior GS-13) careerist on a rotational basis. The individual should be an Ops officer, or at least have some management level experience in a field bureau. This is, of course, not a novel thought, as such a set-up was actually in operation in the early 70's. As a matter of fact, I was the first (and I believe only--though that doesn't discourage me) Ops incumbent, thus I can address the matter from some personal experience. From this experience and from subsequent observation, I see a couple of significant advantages to FBIS.

First, the presence of an experienced field officer in such a key position in Admin would be a definite asset in the day-to-day functioning of the Staff, as well as being of considerable advantage as an advisor and assistant to the chief. Since about a dozen years ago when the FBIS Admin positions were designated support slots, there have been perennial problems, of varying degrees, in providing adequate and timely support to the field. This in no way denigrates the capability or dedication of the many fine support officers who have served with us, as the inadequacies have resulted almost solely from an understandable lack of experience and familiarity with the structure and modus operandi of FBIS. The fact is, we are indeed different (unique even) from any other component in staffing and procedures, and regardless of a support officer's previous experience, to them FBIS is a dramatically new and complicated organization requiring a fairly extensive period of time to comprehend. This is particularly true in the areas of financial accounting and foreign national management--most of which occurs in a vouchered and unclassified mode. I recall that during the period when

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[redacted] was working in Ops, we calculated that over half of our time was spent on Admin related matters. This is because many of the complex and time-consuming problems in Admin have to do with providing support to the field. Having someone assigned to the Staff who is thoroughly familiar with field operations would facilitate Admin's work and lessen the burden on Ops personnel. STAT

Second, serving on the FBIS Admin Staff is invaluable experience for an Ops officer who is earmarked to become a bureau chief in the near future. This officer would get intimately involved in the full range of support activities from logistics procurement to personnel management. Except in our two large bureaus, a bureau chief must act in a way as his own admin officer, and practical experience gained in actual FBIS support work would better qualify him/her to handle the job. I noted that the IG team commented on the lack of preparation and training of some of our first-time bureau chiefs in administrative matters; this rotation to admin could provide the very best "on the job training" in this area for selected officers.

I realize there are several practical problems (not the least of which would be obtaining the agreement of the support career management people) in implementing this proposal. Also it might be somewhat late to do anything this year. However, I do feel strongly that providing an opportunity for FBIS ops officers to be assigned regularly to the Admin Staff would be mutually beneficial to the officer and the office.

Hoping you have a happy and satisfying 1981,

Best Regards,

[redacted]

Bureau Chief

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cc: Chief, Ops
Chief, Admin